From: stoddard@mail.altelco.net@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/6/01 10:27pm
Subject: Microsoft comment

This is not about Microsoft being bad because they are Microsoft. This is
to point out that the Department of Justice is passing up an opportunity
to make America a better place by re-introducing competition back into the PC
software industry.

If you look at the history of the software industry you will see that whatever
market Microsoft has decided to enter, competition dies. Look at spreadsheet
software: at one time Lotus (now IBM) ruled the market but had plenty of
competitors. Microsoft entered the spreadsheet market and practically took
over the market in just a few years. They did the same thing with word
processing software. Wordperfect (now Corel) was the market leader with a
healthy quantity of competitors. Microsoft entered the market and most
competitors went out of business. The same happened with disk defragmenting
software. Many competitors until Microsoft entered the market.

The loss of competition in the office productivity software happened
concurrently. What event caused all of this? Bundling of Microsoft
applications on new PC's. At first they were not the best but they were "free"
and good enough. Why buy the best or even something else? Now everyone sticks
with Microsoft applications for "compatibility".

Everyone who buys a pre-made PC, as opposed to assembling out of parts, pays
a Microsoft "tax". Windows and some kind of Microsoft productivity application
are pre-loaded by the manufacturer. There are a few exceptions but none that
amount to more than a few percent of the market. Competition is lost.

Please take a look at the number of software companies today as opposed to
ten years ago. Also look at the average size of the top five companies
in each category. Now look at the same information for today. I think you
will see a disturbing trend.